

Maryland Historical Trust
State Historic Sites Inventory Form

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. B-4380

Magi No.

DOE ☐ yes ☐ no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic 117-123 West Saratoga Street

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 117-123 W. Saratoga Street ☐ not for publication

city, town Baltimore ☐ vicinity of congressional district Seventh

state Maryland county Baltimore

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name See attached sheet for owners and deeds

street & number telephone no.:

city, town state and zip code

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds Baltimore City Courthouse liber

street & number 100 N. Calvert Street, Room 610 folio

city, town Baltimore state MD

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

20

7. Description

Survey No. B-4380

Condition

— excellent
☒ good
— fair

— deteriorated
— ruins
— unexposed

Check one

— unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
— moved date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Resource Count: 4

This circa 1860 commercial block is four stories tall and ten bays wide. It is divided into four store units. The first story facades are all different, but the upper stories are consistent. The stretcher bond, brick building abuts a partywall structure to the east and an alley to the west.

The first story of #117 has been altered in the 1940s-1950s. The wall is framed by yellow brick piers that flank an angled, recessed display window and entrance. The angled display window is positioned in the east. The display window does not run all the way to the ceiling, but is boxed in a glass case. The wall is recessed behind the display case. The space is filled with a standing sign with the name of the store. The entry to the first-story commercial space is also on the angle. A second door is set back parallel to the street. This is the door to the upper stories. Both glass doors have transoms above. The wall around the window and doors is sided in fluted aluminum siding. The vestibule is laid with brown tiles. The street frontage of the three-bay store is 19'.

The first story of #119 has been altered in the 1950s. It consists of a display window to the east and an angled recessed entrance to the west. The display window is a single large plate set above a brick foundation wall. The vestibule is laid in white hexagonal tiles with a brown tile Greek key frieze. Wood pilasters with recessed panels support a broad entablature frame the storefront. The entablature has a cornice of raised molding. The street frontage of the three-bay store is 19'2".

The first story of #121 consists of an entrance to the east and a display window to the west. Five marble steps lead to the entrance which is a rounded arch opening cut into the brick wall. A recessed vestibule lies behind the opening. The outer door is gone, but the transom remains. The vestibule has a door to the south that leads to the stair hall. The door to the west opens into the first-story store. The vestibule is panelled in mock wood panelling and has a modern tiled floor. The display window has 19th-century wood surrounds consisting of pilasters that support an entablature with raised molding along the bottom. The cellar window in the first bay is set into the stone foundation wall. A separate cellar entrance is in the second bay, reached by a flight of steps from the sidewalk. The street frontage of the two-bay store is 16'10".

The first story of #123 contains a display window to the west and an entrance to the east. Six marble steps lead to the entrance which is a rounded arch opening cut into the brick wall. The outer door is glazed with wood surrounds and has a hinged transom.

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Baltimore, MD
Section 7 Description
7.1

A recessed vestibule floored with black and white tiles and wallpapered with Lincrusta. The vestibule two doors: a double Italianate panelled door with arched lights to the south and to the east a door with a glazed panel above and two raised panels below. Two cellar windows are cut into the stone foundation.

The second story of the commercial block has ten elongated windows with arched lintels. Each storefront has a slightly different remodelling of the windows. Unit #117 has three 4/4 square-top windows. Unit #119 has three 1/1 sash windows that are shorter than the opening and are infilled with panels at the top. Unit #121 has two short 1/1 sash windows with infill panels at the top and bottom. Unit #123 has the original two 4/4 rounded-top sash windows. A low cast iron balcony runs along the second-story windows.

The third and fourth stories have shorter windows with rounded top openings and stone sills. Those of the fourth story are even shorter than those of the third. A three-brick stringcourse runs above the third and fourth stories. Unit #117 has three square-top 4/4 sash windows. Unit #119 has three small 1/1 sash windows with infill panels at the top and bottom. Unit #121 has two small 1/1 sash windows with infill panels at the top and bottom. Unit #123 has the two original rounded-top 4/4 sash windows.

The cornice consists of a fillet, ogee, back band and dentil course.

The interior of the store at #117 is finished with pegboard siding. The stair hall contains a staircase that rises along the west wall to a perpendicular second-story landing before continuing its rise up to the wall where it turns east on the south wall and continues up. The stair has jig-sawn stringers, turned balusters and a bold handgrip. Windows illuminate the landings after the second and third floors. The second-story shop is finished with rough brick; a fireplace and hearth of rough brick rises from the east wall.

The interior of the store at #119 is finished with pegboard walls and acoustic tile ceiling. The display cases inside and in the display window have circa 1950 cast metal floral screens. The stair hall is a level corridor that leads to a stair along the back, south wall.

The interior of #121 is finished with mock wood panelling and a suspended acoustical tile ceiling.

The interior of #123 is finished with modern stucco. The space is divided into two rooms by means of oak pocket doors. An oak curved counter runs along the east wall. There are crown moldings at the ceiling.

8. Significance

Survey No. B-4380

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 ^{XX}	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates _____ Builder/Architect unknown

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

This ten-bay, ~~four~~ four-story building is an unusual example of speculative rowhouse construction along Saratoga Street during the third quarter of the nineteenth century. This particular block probably dates to 1875, the year of the Clay Street fire. The first story on each unit has been altered, but the presence of two separate entrances in the inset vestibules of each unit indicates that these buildings were probably combination shop-houses or shop-offices intended for several tenants. The first story would have been used for sales or display area and the upper stories would have been used as dwellings or office space. The different first-story doorway treatments gave a bit of individuality to each of the repetitive units. The first-stories have also been altered during the intervening years, providing a lesson in changing commercial aesthetics. The upper stories are, however, all identically and rather undecoratively treated. The variations in the windows are all of recent alteration. Overall the building is rather spare, in contrast to some of the more ornamental architecture that also exists on the block. The lack of details suggests that the owner reinvested his profits in other projects rather than investing in superficial embellishments. The massive size of the project (ten bays is unique) was also a significant expense and sheer size was an important part of the design.

The presence of shops and quarters indicates the mixed residential and commercial character of this Baltimore neighborhood in the late nineteenth century. The now altered vestibules in each case contain two entrances, suggesting that each unit was constructed to hold more than one tenant and that separate entrances were desirable. This separation of zones and access further suggest that the first-story was used commercially and the upstairs either as offices or residences. Architectural historian Richard Longstreth writes that "shop-houses prevailed in emerging commercial centers of cities and towns alike through the early decades of the 19th century. Examples can still be seen in areas that have not experienced radical change, even though the

RECEIVED JAN 13 1992

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. B-4380

Richard Longstreth, The Buildings of Main Street (Washington: Preservation Press, 1987).

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name Baltimore East Quad

Quadrangle scale _____

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A

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Zone Easting Northing

B

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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E

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F

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Diane Shaw, Architectural Historian

organization CHAP, Room 1037

date December 19, 1991

street & number 417 E. Fayette Street

telephone 301-396-4866

city or town Baltimore

state MD

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
DHCP/DHCC
100 COMMUNITY PLACE
CROWNSVILLE, MD 21032-2023
301-514-7600

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117-123 West Saratoga Street
Baltimore, MD
Section 8 Significance
8.1

shopfronts themselves have almost always been altered. . . the upper section retaining a domestic character."¹ In this particular example, the residential nature of the upper stories prevailed through to the present century.

The alterations to the first stories suggest that the commercial needs and aesthetics changed over the twentieth century. The fluted aluminum facade of #117 is an excellent example of the circa 1940s modern design using cubist planes and fluted aluminum for effect. The angled facade running towards a recessed entrance was popular: the recessed entrance permitted additional display areas along the vestibule wall and the slant of the facade wall "drew" the sidewalk traffic in. The facade of #119 shows both late Victorian details and 1950s ones: the pilasters and first-story stringcourse are hallmarks of commercial storefronts, while the painted glass window and internal grill work have a decidedly post-War feel. The facades of #121 and #123 are less altered. Large plate glass windows sets in milled architraves with lintels of back bands and dentils make a typical Victorian storefront frame.

¹ Longstreth, Buildings of Main Street, p. 24.

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Section 4
Owners of Property

117 W. Saratoga Street/Louis Boone Jewelry

19' x 124'

Frances Boone et al Trustee

117 W. Saratoga Street

Baltimore, MD 20201

Liber RHB3426 Folio 254

119 W. Saratoga Street/Roman Tress Wigs

19'2" x 125'

Thomas L. Perry

119 W. Saratoga Street

Baltimore, MD 20201

Liber SEB237 Folio 167

121 W. Saratoga Street/Old Grandpa Crystals

16'10" x 100'8"

Thomas L. Perry

121 W. Saratoga Street

Baltimore, MD 20201

Liber SEB237 Folio 167

123 W. Saratoga Street/Simons Plaiting & Button Co.

16'6" x 111'1"

Miles Silver Investments

3510 Sequoia Avenue

Baltimore, MD 21215

Liber SEB2024 Folio 451

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DATA

HISTORIC CONTEXT:

Geographic Organization:
Piedmont

Chronological/Developmental Period:

Industrial/Urban Dominance, 1870-1930
Modern Period, 1930-present, alterations

Historic Period Themes:
Architecture
Economics

Resource Type:
Building

Historic Environment:
Urban

Historic Function and Use:

Commercial

Known Design Source:
None

B-4380

Block
599

PACA

EUTAW

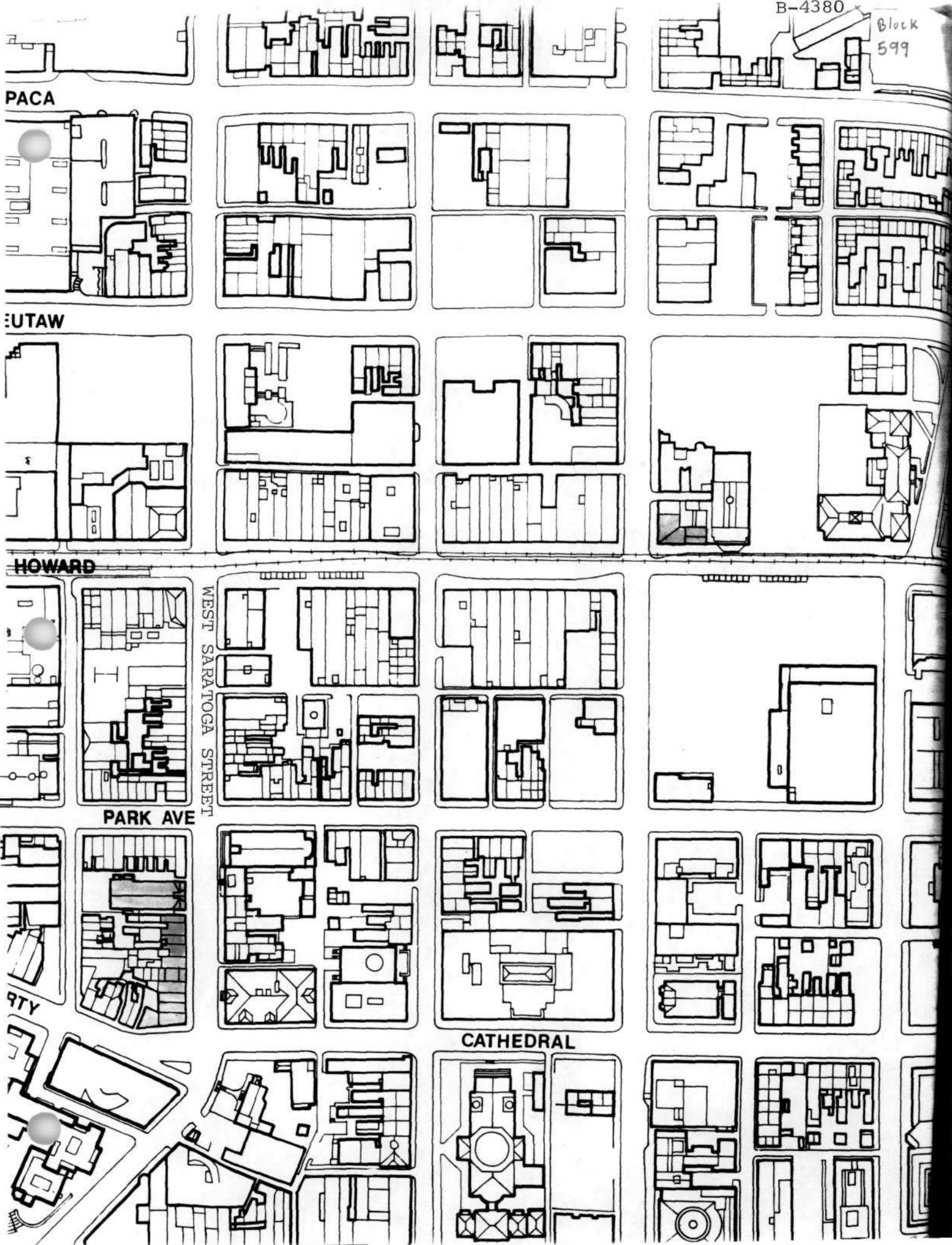
HOWARD

WEST SARATOGA STREET

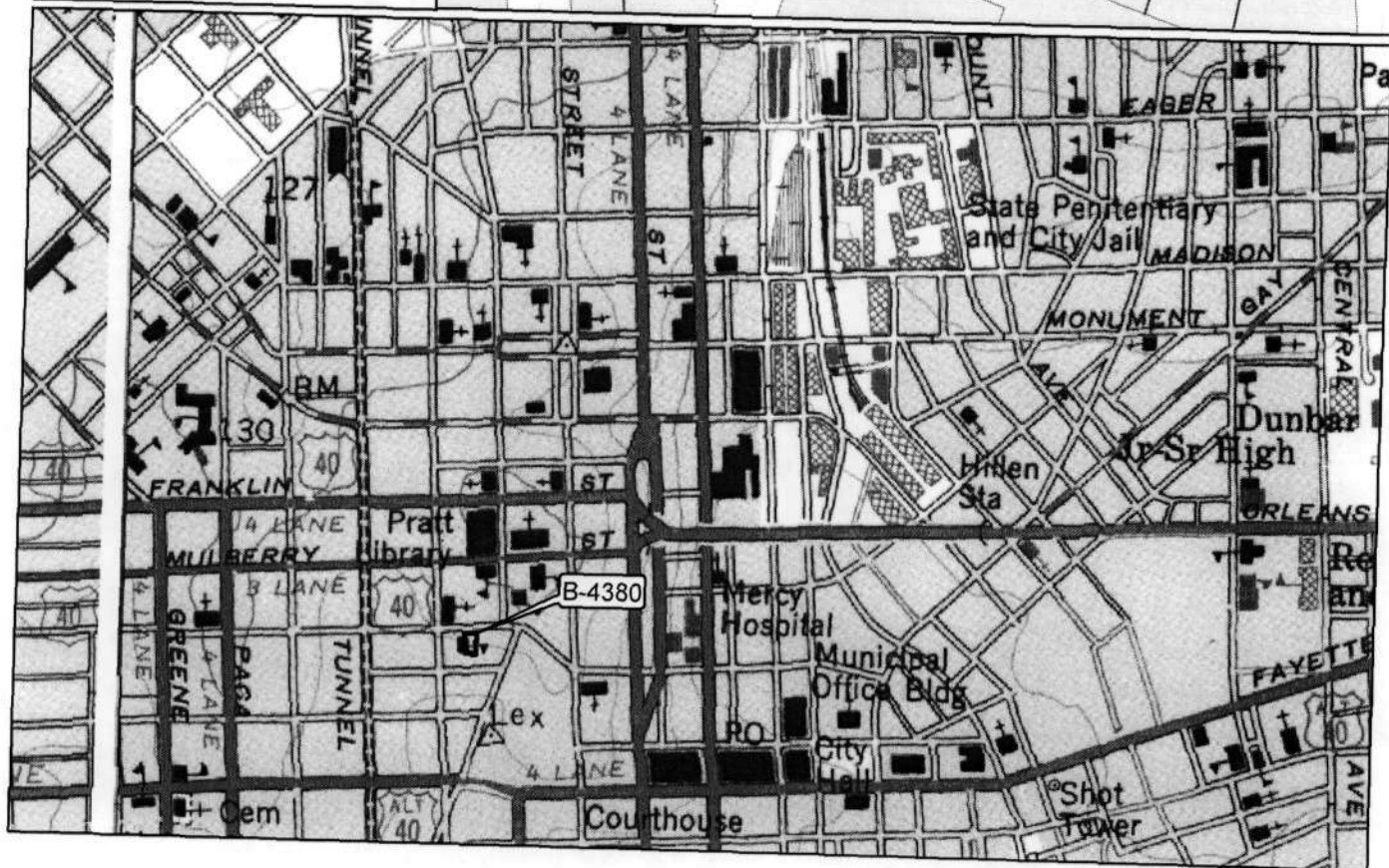
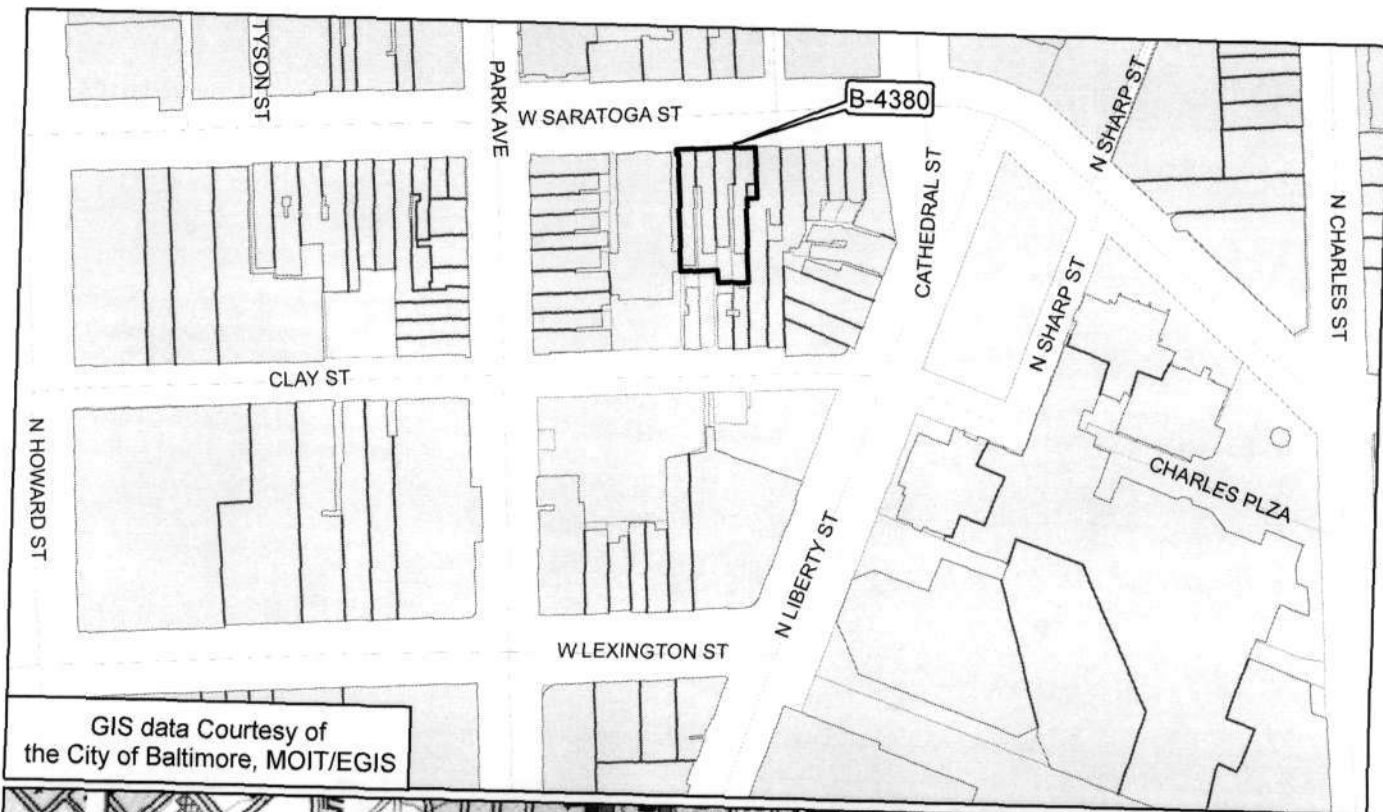
PARK AVE

CATHEDRAL

9TY



B-4380
117-123 W. Saratoga Street
Block 0599, Lots 011-014
Baltimore City
Baltimore East Quad.





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117-123 W. Saratoga St.

Baltimore MD

Diane Shaw

8/91

Maryland SHPO

View of block, north elevation

1/5



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117 W. Saratoga St,
Baltimore MD

Diane Shaw

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Maryland SHPO

Facade detail

2/5

ANTIQUE JEWELRY

BOOKS
CDs
DVDs

FAIR
LEFT
↑



B-4380

119 W. Saratoga St.

Baltimore MD

Diane Shaw

8/91

Maryland SHPD

Facade detail

3/5



Home of Old Grandpa
QUARTZ CRYSTALS & MINERAL STORES



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BASEBALL CARDS
OLD TIME VIDEOS
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EST. 18
ST. SIMON
PLAITING & B
123

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121 W. Saratoga
Baltimore MD

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Maryland SHPO

Facade detail

4/5



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123 W. Saratoga

Baltimore MD

Diane Shaw

S/91

Maryland SHPO

Facade Detail

5/5